DC FORBIDDEN TALES OF DARK MANSION

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Six people trapped on an island . . . one of them was a murderer! But which one? Judith had to find out or die!

"THEY ALL CAME TO DIE!"

52 PAGES 25¢ BIGGER AND BETTER DC FORBIDDEN TALES OF DARK MANSION 52 PAGES 25¢ BIGGER AND BETTER D-873

THEY ALL CAME TO DIE!
SOMEONE LEFT THAT— FOR ME! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT! THE OTHERS ARE ALL DEAD! HOW CAN IT BE?
HOW? WHY? THE QUESTIONS SEEM UNANSWERABLE, AND YET, THERE ARE ANSWERS. BUT TO FIND THEM WE MUST GO BACK— THREE DAYS...
CHAPTER ONE— TRAPPED!
SCRIPT: JACK OLECK
ART: DON HECK
D-65g

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IT BEGAN WITH FIVE STRANGERS UNDER A DARKENING, WINDSWEPT SKY SPEEDING TOWARD A FORBIDDING DESTINATION. IT WAS AS IF GREAT FINGERS OF STONE REACHED FOR THE BOAT, HUNGRILY...
THE GIRL WAS PRETTY BUT HER EYES SEEMED TO MASK SOME HIDDEN PAIN! SHE SHUDDERED— AND THE YOUNG MAN BESIDE HER SMILED UNDERSTANDINGLY...
COLD, MISS? OR IS IT CRAG ISLAND THAT'S MAKING YOU SHIVER? IT DOESN'T LOOK VERY HOSPITABLE, DOES IT?
N-NO, NOT VERY.
LOOK, MISS— I'M FRANK MORTON. I'M A REPORTER. MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME.
A MAN NAMED JOHN AMES INVITED ME HERE. BUT I'VE NEVER MET HIM. IF YOU COULD TELL ME--
--ABOUT MR. AMES? SORRY! I WAS HIRED AS HIS SECRETARY— BUT BY AN AGENCY! I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM.
THAT'S ODD! I WAS ASKED HERE BY THIS AMES FELLOW, TOO. BUT I'VE NEVER MET HIM, EITHER. HOW ABOUT YOU, MR.--?
RICHARDS, MARK RICHARDS. BUT I'M AFRAID MY STORY IS THE SAME AS YOURS. IT'S VERY STRANGE!
THE HORROR THAT WAS TO COME LAY IN THE FUTURE...
THAT CAN'T BE CRAGMORE SANITARIUM!
BUT IT IS!
IF THIS IS SOMEBODY'S IDEA OF A JOKE...
CRAG
2

I WAS ASKED HERE BY MR. AMES TO HANDLE A LEGAL PROBLEM! TAKE ME TO HIM NOW. TELL HIM MILES BRANCHE IS HERE, YOU! DO YOU HEAR ME?
I HEAR YOU, ONLY...
... I CAN'T TAKE YOU TO MR. AMES, HE AIN'T HERE!
CRAGMORE SANITARIUM
YOU'RE LYING! I THINK YOU'RE PART OF THIS STUPID CHARADE, TOO! YOU MUST BE!
I'VE TOLD YOU THE TRUTH, SIR, ANNA AND I WERE HIRED BY AN AGENCY— JUST LIKE THE YOUNG LADY.
THIS IS ANNA— MY WIFE. SHE DOES THE COOKING. MY ORDERS WERE TO PICK YOU UP ON THE MAINLAND, AND BRING YOU HERE!
THAT'S ALL I KNOW.
YOU MEAN THAT'S ALL YOU'LL ADMIT. BUT I'LL GET THE TRUTH OUT OF YOU!
MR. BRANCHE, DON'T! CAN'T YOU SEE HE DOESN'T KNOW ANY MORE THAN WE DO?
SHE'S RIGHT, BRANCHE! RELAX! WE SEEM TO HAVE A REAL MYSTERY HERE—
BUT IT SHOULD BE FUN!..
3

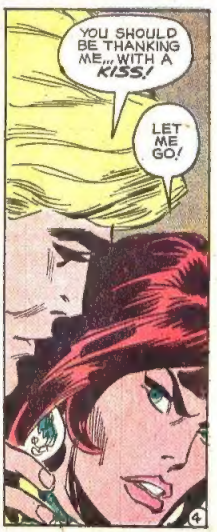
FOR EXAMPLE, I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS YOUNG LADY, EVEN THOUGH I DON'T KNOW HER NAME!
IT'S JUDITH FREMONT, BUT FUN? LOOK AT THIS PLACE! IT-IT'S FRIGHTENING!
IF WE ONLY HAD SOME REAL LIGHTS!

THERE ARE NO LIGHTS. IF YOU'LL EACH TAKE A CANDLE, I'LL SHOW YOU TO YOUR ROOMS.
YOU'LL WANT TO WASH UP BEFORE DINNER...

UNTIL NOW, JUDITH FREMONT WAS ONLY UNCOMFORTABLE. BUT AS THE SURLY HULK LED THE WAY, HER PREMONITION OF EVIL RETURNED...
MY ROOM! UGHH! IT'S HORRIBLE!

THE SHADOWS SEEMED ALIVE, THREATENING. BY THE TIME SHE HAD UNPACKED, SHE WAS TENSE WITH FEAR...
WHAT-- WHO-- WHO IS IT?
WHO'S THERE!?

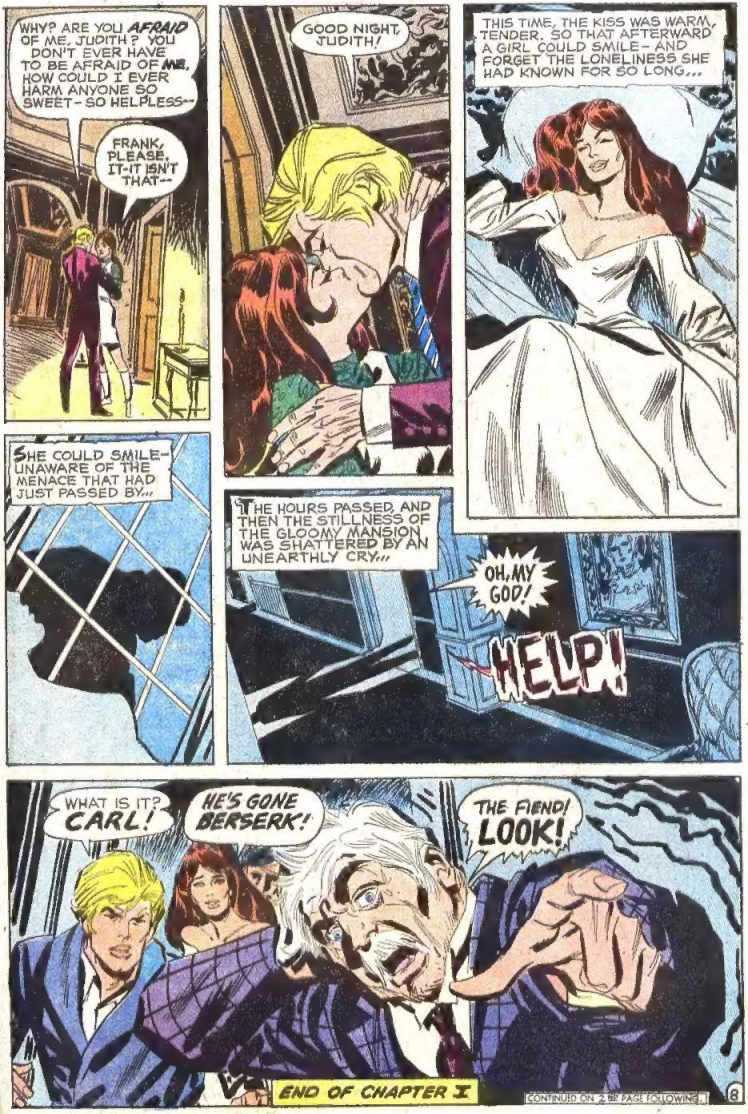
YOU! YOU FRIGHTENED ME! NOW SEE HERE--
HEY, TAKE IT EASY! I'VE BEEN STANDING GUARD, PROTECTING YOU FROM THE BOGEYMAN!
FRANK MORTON, GUARDIAN ANGEL. REMEMBER ME?


YOU SHOULD BE THANKING ME... WITH A KISS!
LET ME GO!

SORRY ABOUT THAT, BUT YOU LOOKED SO PRETTY-- FORGIVE ME?
REALLY, MR. MORTON! LET'S LEAVE IT AT THAT AND GO DOWN TO DINNER, SHALL WE?
DESPITE HERSELF, JUDITH FREMONT FELT AN ATTRACTION TO THE IMPETUOUS YOUNG MAN. THEY DESCENDED THE STAIRS SLOWLY...
WHEW! DRACULA'S DEN! RIGHT OUT OF A GRADE B HORROR MOVIE. BUT DON'T WORRY, BEAUTIFUL! UNCLE FRANK WILL LOOK AFTER YOU.
GOOD EVENING, MISS.
JUDITH CLUNG TO FRANK MORTON'S ARM. HIS SMILE, HIS YOUTHFUL STRENGTH, WERE COMFORTING. BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT...
LOOK! OH NO!
JUDITH! WHAT IS IT?
THAT NOTE-- ON MY PLATE!
JUDITH FREMONT-- YOU ARE A MURDERESS AND THE PENALTY FOR MURDER IS DEATH! YOU WILL NOT LEAVE CRAG ISLAND ALIVE!
OH, FRANK!
I GOT ONE, TOO. MINE ACCUSES ME OF -- MURDER!
SO DOES MINE! THERE'S A NOTE FOR EACH OF US.
CARL! THERE'S A NOTE FOR US, TOO! ON THE SIDEBOARD!
OH, I KNEW IT. SOMEONE KNOWS! SOMEONE--
5

ANNA! BE QUIET! BE— OH, NO!
AHHHH!
SHE'S FAINTING!
I'M A DOCTOR! I'D BETTER GET HER TO HER ROOM. LEAD THE WAY, CARL!
SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. IT'S JUST NERVES!
THANK YOU, DR. RICHARDS.
OHHH...
AH, THERE YOU ARE, DOCTOR! HOW IS THE WOMAN?
FINE. I GAVE HER A SEDATIVE. NOW, PERHAPS, WE CAN GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!
I SECOND THE MOTION...
BUT THAT WAS EASIER SAID THAN DONE! AFTER ENDLESS HOURS, THE SPECULATION WENT ON AND ON...
WE'VE BEEN GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES-- AND ALL WE'VE LEARNED IS THAT EVERY GUEST-- HAS AT ONE TIME IN HIS LIFE BEEN ACCUSED OF MURDER!
NOW I THINK...
ENOUGH! I'VE HAD IT! I'M GOING TO BED!
BED! HOW CAN YOU THINK OF SLEEP? THERE'S SOMETHING TERRIBLY WRONG HERE. I CAN FEEL IT! HOW CAN YOU BE SO-SO--
CALM, MISS FREMONT? WHY NOT? YOU SEE... WHOEVER OUR MYSTERIOUS JOKER IS-- THE JOKE IS ON HIM! I HAVE CANCER. I'M A DEAD MAN IN ANY CASE!

OH, MR. BRANCHE, I'M SO SORRY...
WAIT! THERE'S CARL!
JUST A MOMENT, CARL! WE'VE GOT SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU! AND WE WANT ANSWERS!
I HAVE NO ANSWERS, AND YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO QUESTION ME! LEAVE ME ALONE!
CARL'S VOICE WAS A SNARL, BUT MILES WAS NOT EASILY PUT OFF! HE POUNDED QUESTIONS AT GELLER— SHREWD, PROBING QUESTIONS...
NO MORE QUESTIONS! THE WHOLE WORLD ASKS CARL GELLER QUESTIONS! AND I HAVE DONE NOTHING! I KNOW NOTHING, I--
WAIT A MINUTE... GELLER! CARL AND ANNA GELLER! OF COURSE— MY PAPER CARRIED THE STORY!
YOU AND YOUR WIFE WERE ACCUSED OF MURDERING YOUR EMPLOYER!
HE DIED UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, AFTER NAMING YOU IN HIS WILL! YOU WERE NEVER INDICTED...
BECAUSE WE WERE INNOCENT! I WILL ANSWER NO MORE QUESTIONS!
LET'S ALL GO TO BED! THAT'S MY PRESCRIPTION FOR THE LOT OF US! ESPECIALLY YOU, MR. BRANCHE!
THANKS! I CAN USE IT!
I'LL SEE YOU TO YOUR DOOR, JUDITH!
AND SO, EACH OF THE GROUP SEPARATED FROM THE REST. IT WAS NOW A GROUP IN WHICH THE SEEDS OF SUSPICION HAD BEEN PLANTED, SEEDS THAT GREW SWIFTLY...
REMEMBER, WON'T YOU, JUDITH-- LOCK YOUR DOOR FROM THE INSIDE!
ALL OF A SUDDEN-- YOU'RE VERY IMPORTANT TO ME!
NO, FRANK, DON'T!
7


WHY? ARE YOU AFRAID OF ME, JUDITH? YOU DON'T EVER HAVE TO BE AFRAID OF ME, HOW COULD I EVER HARM ANYONE SO SWEET - SO HELPLESS--
FRANK, PLEASE, IT-IT ISN'T THAT--
GOOD NIGHT, JUDITH!
THIS TIME, THE KISS WAS WARM, TENDER, SO THAT AFTERWARD A GIRL COULD SMILE - AND FORGET THE LONELINESS SHE HAD KNOWN FOR SO LONG...
SHE COULD SMILE - UNAWARE OF THE MENACE THAT HAD JUST PASSED BY...
THE HOURS PASSED, AND THEN THE STILLNESS OF THE GLOOMY MANSION WAS SHATTERED BY AN UNEARTHLY CRY...
OH, MY GOD!
HELP!
WHAT IS IT? CARL!
HE'S GONE BERSERK!
THE FIEND! LOOK!
END OF CHAPTER I
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

CHAPTER 2
DEATH PLAYS HOST
MY WIFE! MY ANNA—DEAD! MURDERED!
NOT A SIGN OF VIOLENCE AS FAR AS I CAN TELL! THIS WOMAN DIED OF NATURAL CAUSES—THIS ISN'T MURDER!
FOR ONE BRIEF MOMENT, RELIEF WIPED THE FEAR FROM FIVE FACES, UNTIL...
NO, DOCTOR? THEN PERHAPS YOU CAN EXPLAIN THIS MARK ON HER NECK! ONLY ONE THING MAKES A MARK LIKE THAT—A HYPODERMIC!
A HYPO— SO THAT'S WHAT KILLED HER! AN INJECTION!
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BUT WE CAN'T BE SURE OF THAT, MR. BRANCHE! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
ONLY ONE OF US WOULD HAVE A HYPODERMIC! AND LAST NIGHT HE GAVE ANNA A PILL...TO MAKE HER SLEEP!
THE MAN MAKES SENSE, DOCTOR! I'VE BEEN WONDERING WHY A YOUNG MAN LIKE YOU WOULD BURY HIMSELF IN A PLACE LIKE THIS!
SO NOW I'M THE MURDERER, EH? YOU'RE INSANE!
YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED ME, WHY ARE YOU REALLY HERE, RICHARDS? WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? TELL US!
ALL RIGHT- YOU'LL FIND OUT ANYWAY! A YEAR AGO, I LOST A PATIENT! SHE DIED OF AN OVERDOSE OF A DRUG I PRESCRIBED!
I HAD TO TAKE THIS JOB! NO ONE WOULD TRUST ME AFTER THAT.
BUT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE HERE WITH SOMETHING TO HIDE! WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE MILES BRANCHE, THE HANGING D.A., THE PROSECUTOR WHO SENT NINETEEN MEN TO THE GALLOWS!
RIGHT, RICHARDS! UNTIL MY ILLNESS FORCED ME TO RETIRE TO PRIVATE PRACTICE, I WAS A D.A.! AND I'M NOT ASHAMED OF MY RECORD!
I'M PROUD! I ONLY WISH MY SCORE WERE HIGHER! TWENTY-FIVE, PERHAPS!
IT WOULD BE A FITTING MEMORIAL TO MY CAREER WHEN I DIE!
YOU MUST BE MAD!
LEGAL DEATHS, RICHARDS! THE LAW MUST BE UPHELD! I'VE DEVOTED MY LIFE TO IT!
AND I'VE DEVOTED MINE TO MEDICINE- AND FOR WHAT? TO BE HOUNDED BY FANATICS LIKE YOU?
I'VE HAD ENOUGH! GOOD NIGHT!
RICHARDS' PAIN STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD IN THE GIRL...
I THINK I'LL SAY GOODNIGHT, GENTLEMEN!
GOOD-NIGHT, JUDITH! SLEEP WELL!
WE'D BETTER CALL THE POLICE!
10

BUT THEN CAME A RUDE SHOCK!
HELLO, HELLO! NO ANSWER, IT'S DEAD!
THAT DOES IT! I'M LEAVING TOMORROW MORNING!
I DON'T BLAME YOU! NO ONE WILL WANT TO STAY NOW!
JUDITH STEPPED OUTSIDE SEARCHING-WHILE SODDEN LEAVES LIKE SKELETONS OF LOST DREAMS WHIRLED, OBSCURING VISION...
DOCTOR! WHERE ARE YOU?
OH! LET ME GO!
AFRAID OF ME? SO YOU THINK I'M A MURDERER, TOO? YOU LITTLE FOOL!
LOOK THERE! THAT OLD CISTERN MUST BE A HUNDRED FEET DEEP! ONE MORE STEP AND YOU'D HAVE BEEN ON THE BOTTOM!
FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT YOU FOLLOWED ME BECAUSE YOU BELIEVED ME. I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU'RE LIKE EVERY OTHER WOMAN!
I DO BELIEVE YOU!
THE WORDS CAME HARD. IT WASN'T EASY TO SPEAK TO THIS DARK, BROODING MAN. BUT SOMETHING ABOUT HIM TUGGED AT JUDITH'S HEART...
IT WAS A WOMAN, WASN'T IT? WHOEVER SHE WAS-SHE HURT YOU TERRIBLY! THAT'S WHY-YOU'RE SO BITTER.
YES-MY NURSE. WE WERE IN LOVE. SHE WAS THE ONE WHO GAVE MY PATIENT THE OVERDOSE!
AND AFTERWARD, SHE SWORE I WAS THE ONE WHO MADE THE MISTAKE-TO SAVE HERSELF! THE WOMAN I LOVED!

SO NOW YOU HATE ALL WOMEN. BUT-NOT ALL WOMEN ARE LIKE THAT, DOCTOR--
AREN'T THEY? I SUPPOSE YOU'RE DIFFERENT! YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?
YOU BELIEVE ME? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!
AND WHAT IF I SAID AGAIN -I- BELIEVE YOU! WOULD IT HELP?
IT WOULD IF I THOUGHT YOU MEANT IT. BUT YOU DON'T! YOU'RE ALL ALIKE...
--AND I'LL PROVE IT!
HIS KISS WAS HARSH- A DEFIANT GESTURE TORN FROM THE TORTURED DEPTHS OF HIS SOUL...
THEN SOMEHOW THE HARSHNESS SOFTENED... THE KISS BECAME ALMOST TENDER, ACHING...
BUT BITTERNESS IS NOT SO EASILY DISPELLED...
WELL, MISS FREMONT? IT DISGUSTS YOU, DOESN'T IT? -TO BE KISSED BY A MAN THE WORLD CALLS USELESS AND INCOMPETENT?
NO! IT MAKES ME SAD... FOR YOU!
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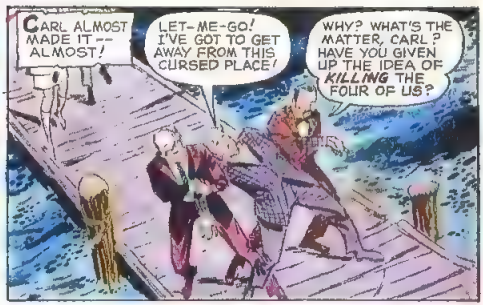
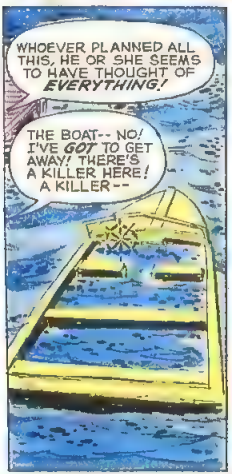
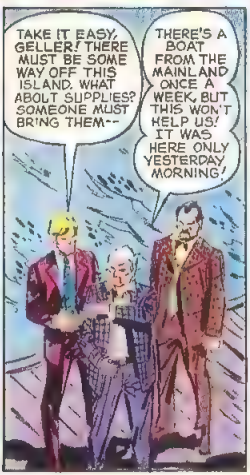
I SEE—PITY! ONLY—I DON'T WANT YOUR PITY! YOU'VE PLAYED YOUR SYMPATHETIC, LITTLE SCENE. NOW, JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!
VERY WELL, GOODNIGHT, DOCTOR!
AND MOMENTS LATER...
OH, DEAR! I'M SO CONFUSED! IS DR. RICHARDS... A MURDERER? SOMEONE IS! AND POOR ANNA—DEAD!
I CAN'T STAND IT. I'M LEAVING HERE TOMORROW!
THE NEXT DAY, THE RAIN HAD STOPPED, AND A BRILLIANT SUN BURNED OUT THE HORROR OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT...
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU PEOPLE— BUT I'VE HAD MY FILL OF THIS MYSTERY! I'M GOING—AS SOON AS WE'VE EATEN OUR BREAKFAST!
OH, I'M SO GLAD, MR BRANCHE! I'LL JOIN YOU!
INCLUDE ME IN! HOW ABOUT YOU, DOCTOR?
WITH PLEASURE!
ONE HOUR LATER, THE GROUP HAD PACKED THEIR BAGS AND ASSEMBLED BELOW...
NO DREAMS? NOT EVEN A THOUGHT OF ME?
FRANK! DON'T BE SILLY! ALL I KNOW IS THAT I'M LEAVING THIS HIDEOUS PLACE!
DOCTOR, LOOK THERE! IT'S CARL! HE'S UNTYING THE BOAT!
13


CARL ALMOST MADE IT --- ALMOST!
LET-ME-GO! I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM THIS CURSED PLACE!
WHY? WHAT'S THE MATTER, CARL? HAVE YOU GIVEN UP THE IDEA OF KILLING THE FOUR OF US?

LET ME GO! I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY! NOT BECAUSE I'M A MURDERER! THERE'S DANGER HERE! DEATH--YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!
WAIT! LOOK AT THAT!


WHOEVER PLANNED ALL THIS, HE OR SHE SEEMS TO HAVE THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING!
THE BOAT--NO! I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY! THERE'S A KILLER HERE! A KILLER--


TAKE IT EASY, GELLER! THERE MUST BE SOME WAY OFF THIS ISLAND. WHAT ABOUT SUPPLIES? SOMEONE MUST BRING THEM--
THERE'S A BOAT FROM THE MAINLAND ONCE A WEEK, BUT THIS WON'T HELP US! IT WAS HERE ONLY YESTERDAY MORNING!

YOU FOOLS! DON'T YOU SEE? IT WON'T BE BACK FOR SIX DAYS! WE'RE TRAPPED HERE--WITH A MURDERER!
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

MAROONED! OH MY GOD! WHAT HAVE WE GOTTEN OURSELVES INTO?
DON'T, JUDITH! PLEASE!
POOR GIRL! SHE'S HYSTERICAL! I SUGGEST WE GO BACK TO THE HOUSE AND TALK THINGS OVER!
BUT THEN, WHILE DEATH STILL LURKED SOMEWHERE ON CRAG ISLAND...
TALK, TALK! TWO HOURS OF IDLE TALK AND—NOTHING!
WE NEED AN IDEA! WHAT ABOUT YOU, DOCTOR? YOU'VE HARDLY SAID A WORD.
WHAT IS THERE TO SAY?
CLEARLY, ONE OF US IS JOHN AMES! IT COULD EVEN BE MISS FREMONT! HER HYSTERICS COULD BE AN ACT!
THAT'S RIDICULOUS!
LET'S NOT DEBATE IT NOW! WHAT WE NEED IS A WEAPON! ONLY---
HE HAS A GUN! THE REPORTER! I SAW IT IN HIS ROOM! MAYBE HE'S THE MURDERER! MAYBE HE'S JOHN AMES!
DON'T BE STUPID!
ANNA WAS KILLED WITH A HYPODERMIC, NOT A GUN! BUT WE WOULD LIKE AN EXPLANATION. HOW ABOUT IT, MORTON?
ALL RIGHT—I DO HAVE A GUN. IN MY JOB, YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU'LL NEED ONE. BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME A KILLER!
NOW YOU KNOW! I HAVE A GUN!
I GIVE YOU FAIR WARNING! I AM PROTECTING MISS FREMONT! FROM NOW ON, WHERE SHE GOES, SO DO I!
FRANK—DON'T BE SILLY! I'M LEAVING THIS AWFUL PLACE!

NUMBLY, JUDITH LET HERSELF BE LED AWAY—AND DOCTOR RICHARDS' HAUNTED EYES WATCHED HER AS SHE WENT...
OH FRANK, I'M SO FRIGHTENED! WHO WOULD WANT TO KILL THAT POOR WOMAN?
WHO KNOWS? REMEMBER, JUDITH—IT COULD BE ANY ONE OF US--
ANY ONE OF US-- EXCEPT YOU OR ME! JUDITH, YOU DO BELIEVE THAT, DON'T YOU? YOU KNOW I COULD NEVER HARM YOU.
I-I WANT TO BELIEVE IT. OH, FRANK, I DO! BUT I'M SO AFRAID--
DON'T BE! NOTHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU! NOTHING! I WON'T LET IT. NOW THAT I'VE FOUND YOU— AT LAST--
THE GIRL TREMBLED, AFRAID, BUT THERE WAS WARMTH AND COMFORT TO BE FOUND IN THIS MAN'S ARMS— EVEN WHEN SHE DIDN'T TRUST HIM FULLY...
CAN I TRUST HIM? CAN I?
IT WAS ONLY LATER, ALONE IN THE DARKNESS OF HER ROOM, THAT THE DEAD SILENCE BROUGHT BACK JUDITH'S FEAR—A SILENCE THAT WAS DISTURBED BY A FAINT SOUND...
END OF CHAPTER II
CONTINUED ON 2ND EACH FOLLOWING
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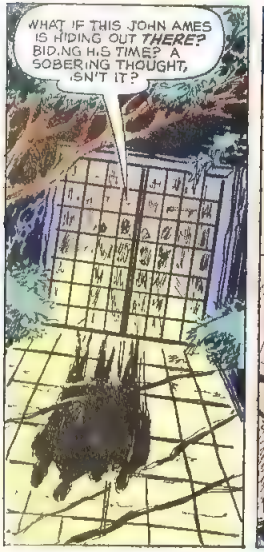
MURDER STRIKES AGAIN
CHAPTER 3
HE'S—HE'S COMING THIS WAY!
FRANK!

BUT THE HOPE WAS A VAIN ONE...
SO! CARL GELLER IS GONE! THEN ONE OF US FOUR IS JOHN AMES! NO ONE ELSE COULD HAVE DONE IT!
NO! YOU CAN'T INCLUDE JUDITH! CARL WAS BIG... POWERFUL! NO WOMAN COULD HAVE STABBED HIM!

COULDN'T SHE, MORTON? IT DOESN'T TAKE TOO MUCH STRENGTH TO DRIVE A KNIFE INTO A MAN'S BACK! ASK THE DOCTOR!
I'M AFRAID-- HE'S RIGHT, JUDITH.

GET AWAY FROM HER! I DON'T KNOW WHO KILLED GELLER, BUT IT WASN'T JUDITH! I'LL STAKE MY LIFE ON IT! ONE OF YOU IS JOHN AMES!
YOUR FAITH IS TOUCHING, MORTON, BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE OVERLOOKED ONE OTHER POSSIBILITY, IN FACT--WE ALL HAVE!


WHAT IF THIS JOHN AMES IS HIDING OUT THERE? BIDING HIS TIME? A SOBERING THOUGHT, ISN'T IT?

I'D SUGGEST THAT TOMORROW--WE TRY TO FIND HIM! BEFORE HE FINDS US!

A STORM RAGED OVER THE SANITARIUM. RAIN, WIND... A BOLT OF LIGHTNING CRACKED IN THE SKY AND THE LIGHT SHOWED THE SHADOW OF A MAN, GROTESQUE AND HUGE, THROWN ACROSS THE BUILDING.

DAWN WAS A BLESSING, DESPITE SCUDDING BLACK CLOUDS AND COLD, WET AIR...
WE'RE AGREED, THEN! WE'LL FORM TWO SEARCH PARTIES. IF THERE'S SOMEONE ON CRAG ISLAND, WE'VE GOT TO FIND HIM!
AGREED! LET'S GO!
NOW THERE WAS LIGHT. EVEN SO SMALL A BLESSING WAS WELCOME IN THIS PLACE OF LURKING DANGER...
FOR A TIME, THE GOING WAS EASY! BUT CRAG ISLAND WAS A HORROR OF SHEER CLIFFS, A BLEAK WORLD OF JAGGED STONE...
I-I NEED TO REST...
OOOF
ALL TOO SOON, BRUISED HANDS COULD NO LONGER GRIP. TORTURED MUSCLES SCREAMED FOR REST...
OH! FRANK! I...I...
JUDITH!
HANG ON! I'M COMING!
CONTINUED ON 38th PAG. FOLLOWING
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POOR LITTLE THING! SO SOFT--
OH, FRANK...
JUDITH, I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU. YOU- YOU CARE JUST A LITTLE, DON'T YOU?
FRANK, I-I CAN'T LOVE YOU. IT WOULDN'T BE FAIR. YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ME.
I KNOW ENOUGH!
NO, YOU DON'T! OH, IF YOU ONLY UNDERSTOOD...
FRANK, BEFORE I CAME HERE, THERE WAS ANOTHER MAN--
I DON'T CARE! I ONLY--
NO! LISTEN TO ME! THIS MAN- HE WANTED TO MARRY ME, BUT I DIDN'T LOVE HIM...
AND NOW- HE'S DEAD. HE TOOK HIS OWN LIFE!
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE! HIS FAMILY WAS WEALTHY, INFLUENTIAL-- THEY BLAMED ME! THEY HOUNDED ME, ACCUSED ME OF HIS DEATH! THEY GAVE ME NO PEACE! DON'T YOU SEE?
THEY HATE ME! WHAT IF THEY SENT SOMEONE TO CRAG ISLAND-TO LURE ME HERE...TO KILL ME?
BUT-WHAT ABOUT GELLER? AND ANNA? WHY WOULD THAT SOMEONE KILL THEM?
JUDITH, YOU'RE NOT MAKING SENSE!

JUDITH, I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE PAST. I'LL LOOK OUT FOR YOU. ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU LOVE ME.
I-I'M CONFUSED FRANK, BUT FOR NOW—HOLD ME. JUST HOLD ME!
TERROR SEEMED FAR AWAY. BUT WIND AND STORM TAKE NO NOTE OF HUMAN EMOTIONS...
RAIN! THE STORM'S STARTED UP AGAIN. I'D BETTER GET YOU BACK, DARLING. ARE YOU OKAY NOW?
I-I THINK SO! JUST LEAD THE WAY...
BRAVE WORDS!—EASIER SAID THAN DONE...
FRANK! FRANK, WAIT!
WHERE ARE YOU? I CAN'T SEE YOU!
GONE— HE— HE'S GONE!
OH MY GOD! SOB!
END OF CHAPTER III
CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING.
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SEARCH FOR A KILLER
CHAPTER 4
IN THE HOWLING STORM, IT WAS EASY TO TAKE A WRONG TURNING. THE LONG MINUTES DRAGGED BY. JUDITH, PANIC-STRICKEN, HAD ABOUT GIVEN UP HOPE, WHEN...
JUDITH! THANK GOD I FOUND YOU!
OH, FRANK, I THOUGHT YOU LEFT ME ON PURPOSE!
LEAVE YOU? NEVER! I LOST YOU IN THE STORM!
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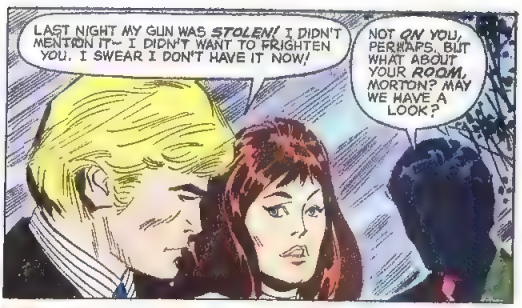
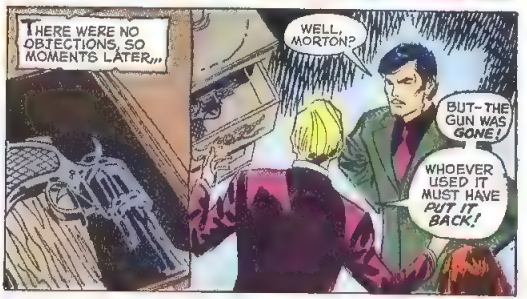
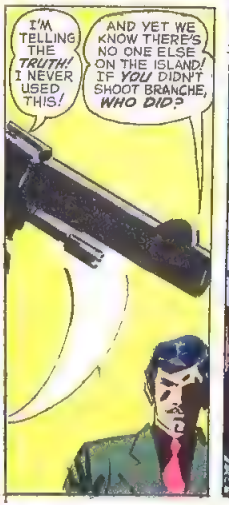
GRATEFULLY, THE GIRL LET HERSELF BE LED TO CRAGMORE. THERE A FIGURE APPEARED FROM NOWHERE...
MORTON! AT LAST! HAVE YOU SEEN BRANCHE?
I LOST HIM OUT THERE. WE DIDN'T FIND ANYONE--
NEITHER DID WE! THE ISLAND'S DESERTED.
BUT IF BRANCHE'S MISSING, WE'D BETTER FIND HIM! SOMETHING MAY HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM!
AND SO ANOTHER SEARCH...
BRANCHE! BRANCHE - WHERE ARE YOU?
A SEARCH THAT ENDED IN A NEGLECTED GARDEN WHERE...
KEEP JUDITH AWAY!
BRANCHE! THAT STAIN ON HIS COAT--
DR RICHARDS! WHAT HAPPENED TO BRANCHE?
HE'S DEAD! SHOT THROUGH THE HEART!

SHOT! AND YOU LEFT ME...AND YOU HAVE A GUN--
NO! JUDITH, YOU CAN'T BELIEVE THAT! I DIDN'T KILL BRANCHE! I COULDN'T HAVE!


LAST NIGHT MY GUN WAS STOLEN! I DIDN'T MENTION IT-- I DIDN'T WANT TO FRIGHTEN YOU. I SWEAR I DON'T HAVE IT NOW!
NOT ON YOU, PERHAPS, BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR ROOM, MORTON? MAY WE HAVE A LOOK?


THERE WERE NO OBJECTIONS, SO MOMENTS LATER,,,
WELL, MORTON?
BUT-THE GUN WAS GONE!
WHOEVER USED IT MUST HAVE PUT IT BACK!


I'M TELLING THE TRUTH! I NEVER USED THIS!
AND YET WE KNOW THERE'S NO ONE ELSE ON THE ISLAND! IF YOU DIDN'T SHOOT BRANCHE, WHO DID?

I DON'T KNOW! UNLESS IT WAS YOU! YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE JUDITH BELIEVE--
ALL RIGHT-- BUT I'LL BE IN MY ROOM... JUST IN CASE SHE SHOULD NEED ME!
GET OUT! GET OUT! I WANT TO TALK TO HER, ALONE!

MARK VANISHED, AND JUDITH WAS FACED WITH A CHOICE-- ONE OF THESE MEN-- WAS A MURDERER!
JUDITH--
NO! DON'T TOUCH ME! SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY WRONG!
EVERY ONE OF US WHO CAME HERE IS HIDING SOMETHING- EXCEPT--
--YOU!

WHAT'S YOUR SECRET, FRANK? WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?
ALL RIGHT! I AM HIDING SOMETHING, BUT NOT ANYTHING TERRIBLE. IT'S JUST THAT—
MY NAME ISN'T FRANK MORTON!
MORTON WORKS FOR MY PAPER! BUT WHEN THE INVITATION TO CRAG ISLAND CAME, HE WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY, SO MY EDITOR SENT ME!
LIAR! IF THAT WERE TRUE, WHY WOULD YOU USE HIS NAME? WHY LIE?
BECAUSE THE INVITATION WAS ADDRESSED TO HIM! MAYBE THE REAL FRANK MORTON HAS SOMETHING TO HIDE, BUT I DON'T! JUDITH—
KEEP AWAY FROM ME! I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!
THEN I'LL MAKE YOU BELIEVE ME! LIAR OR NOT, YOU LOVE ME! I KNOW YOU DO!
JUST FOR AN INSTANT—JUDITH HESITATED, BUT THIS MAN WAS NOT THE MAN WHO HELD HER BEFORE. THIS MAN'S FACE IN THE GLOOM WAS VICIOUS, SINISTER...
NO!
I'VE GOT TO TALK TO MARK...DOCTOR RICHARDS!
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING
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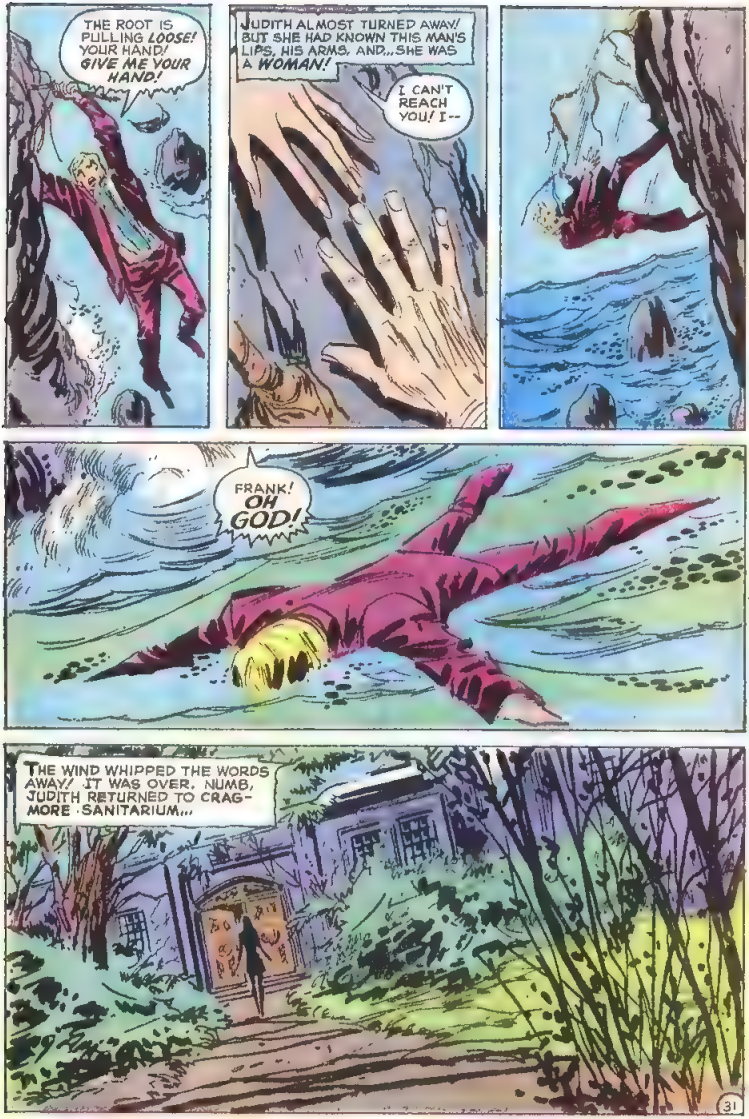
MARK, HELP ME! HELP ME! KEEP HIM AWAY FROM ME!
JUDITH! WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S FRANK! HE'S THE ONE! I KNOW HE IS! I--
OHHHH...
MARK! WHAT IS IT?
POISON! IN THE DRINKING WATER-- POISON...
AH-H-H---

THERE WAS NO DOUBT, THEN. A GIRL ALONE STARED DOWN ON THE ONE HUMAN BEING WHO MIGHT HAVE HELPED HER, AND...
SOMEONE IS HERE! WATCHING ME!
I'VE GOT TO HIDE! HIDE--
BUT WHERE COULD SHE HIDE ON THAT ISLAND OF DEATH?
NO PLACE TO HIDE! NOTHING TO DO EXCEPT TO CROUCH HELPLESSLY AND LISTEN FOR THE INEVITABLE FOOTSTEPS...
JUDITH! OPEN THE DOOR! IT'S FRANK! I ONLY WANT TO TALK TO YOU.
OPEN IT - OR I'LL BREAK IT DOWN!
MURDER POUNDED AT A LOCKED DOOR! THE AGONIZING SECONDS TICKED AWAY! THEN.
CRACCK!
END OF CHAPTER IV

DEATH IN THE SHAPE OF A MAN! THAT WAS WHAT FRANK MORTON HAD BECOME TO JUDITH FREMONT, BUT HOPE NEVER QUITE FADES IN THE HUMAN BREAST...
AN END TO MADNESS
CHAPTER 5
BEYOND THE FRENCH DOORS OF JUDITH'S ROOM, SHE SAW A BALCONY, A STAIRCASE--- ESCAPE! BUT... TO WHERE?
HE'S COMING AFTER ME! OH, GOD, HELP ME! HELP ME!
THERE WAS NO ESCAPE! ONLY DESPERATION DROVE JUDITH ON, UNTIL SHE COULD GO NO FURTHER...
FRANK, DON'T! DON'T HURT ME! YOU SAID YOU LOVED ME!
AND I DO, JUDITH! TRUST ME!

DARLING, LET ME SHOW YOU! COME TO ME LET ME REASSURE YOU...
IF ONLY—I COULD! I—I'M SO TIRED! BUT... I DON'T DARE! I--
OH FRANK, I CAN'T RUN ANY MORE. I CAN'T!
INCREDIBLY, THE TREMBLING GIRL WENT INTO THE MAN'S ARMS. AND THE MAN SMILED. A SMILE OF SATISFACTION THAT VANISHED SUDDENLY...
MY GUN! THAT'S WHY YOU CAME TO ME! SO THAT YOU COULD STEAL MY GUN!
AND I'LL USE IT, FRANK, DON'T MAKE ME!
DON'T BE A FOOL! GIVE IT TO ME!
NO! YOU KILLED THE OTHERS! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT!
BUT WHAT COULD A FRIGHTENED GIRL DO AGAINST THE STRENGTH OF A MAN? JUST AS THE GUN WAS WRENCHED AWAY...
THE GROUND! IT'S GIVING WAY--


THE ROOT IS PULLING LOOSE! YOUR HAND! GIVE ME YOUR HAND!
JUDITH ALMOST TURNED AWAY! BUT SHE HAD KNOWN THIS MAN'S LIPS, HIS ARMS, AND... SHE WAS A WOMAN!
I CAN'T REACH YOU! I--
FRANK! OH GOD!
THE WIND WHIPPED THE WORDS AWAY! IT WAS OVER. NUMB, JUDITH RETURNED TO CRAGMORE SANITARIUM...

BUT IT WAS NOT YET OVER...
AT FIRST, SHE COULD ONLY GAPE IN DUMB HORROR, THEN...
A NOOSE! SOMEONE LEFT IT! BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE STILL ALIVE! WHO--WHY--
WHY? CAN'T YOU GUESS, MISS FREMONT? THE NOOSE IS FOR YOU!
BRANCHE! IT ISN'T POSSIBLE! I SAW THE BLOOD! MARK EXAMINED YOU! YOU'RE DEAD! DEAD!
NO. WHAT YOU SAW WAS PAINT. AS FOR THE EXAMINATION -THE DOCTOR LIED WHEN HE SAID I WAS DEAD.
YOU SEE, WE HAD A LITTLE PLAN -- TO THROW THE SO-CALLED REAL KILLER OFF GUARD. ONLY THE DOCTOR DIDN'T KNOW THAT I WAS THE KILLER. SO I POISONED HIM. NEAT, EH?
THEN- IT WAS YOU! YOU'RE JOHN AMES!
OF COURSE. WHEN I LEARNED THAT I HAD CANCER, I DECIDED THAT MY DEATH SHOULD MEAN SOMETHING. I WISHED I HAD CONVICTED THE OTHER FIVE MURDERERS. REMEMBER? SO I FOUND YOU AND THE OTHERS...
CONTINUED ON 42 PAGE
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YOU ARE ALL PEOPLE WHOM THE LAW HAD ABSOLVED! WRONGLY! I DECIDED TO RIGHT THOSE WRONGS! AND TO MAKE THE DEATHS OF THOSE PEOPLE MY MEMORIAL!
YOU ARE INSANE! JUST AS MARK SAID YOU WERE!
INSANE? I REPRESENT JUSTICE! WITH YOUR DEATH, I'LL HAVE MY TWENTY-FIVE CONVICTIONS! I'LL BE ABLE TO DIE IN PEACE!
BUT YOU SAID YOU ALREADY HAD NINETEEN CONVICTIONS! EVEN IF YOU KILL ME--THAT'S ONLY TWENTY-FOUR!
ALL THIS WAS FOR NOTHING! NOTHING!
NO! YEARS AGO I SENTENCED A MAN WHO AFTERWARD TURNED OUT TO BE INNOCENT! I HAVE TO BE NUMBER TWENTY-FIVE!
YOU CAN HANG YOURSELF NOW, OR WAIT FOR THE POLICE! WHEN THEY FIND YOU WITH FIVE BODIES AND NO WITNESSES--YOU SEE? GOODBY, MISS FREMONT!
BUT SHE DOES HAVE A WITNESS, BRANCHE!
YOU SHOULD HAVE USED ANOTHER POISON! ONE THAT DIDN'T HAVE AN ODOR!
YOU USED CYANIC ACID! BUT I'M A DOCTOR-- I SMELLED IT! JUST AS I KNEW YOU WERE INSANE WHEN YOU BRAGGED ABOUT THE MEN YOU'D HANGED!
MARK! MARK--
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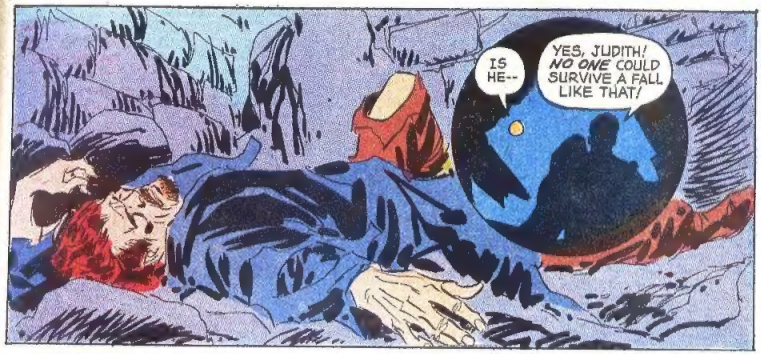
I SUSPECTED YOU-
BUT I HAD NO PROOF!
SO I PLAYED ALONG WITH YOUR SCHEME!
SOMEONE WILL HANG, BRANCHE!
BUT IT WILL BE YOU!
NO, YOU INTERFERING FOOL!
IT WON'T BE! I CAN STILL CHOOSE MY OWN WAY OF DYING--
THE EASY WAY, BRANCHE?
YOU DON'T DESERVE IT!
BUT-WHO COULD MATCH STRENGTH WITH A MADMAN?
THERE IS NO STOPPING BRANCHE!
AND YET--
-THERE IS A HIGHER JUSTICE THAN MAN'S...
MARK! THE CISTERN-
HE'S HEADING RIGHT FOR-
YA-A-A-A-A


IS HE--
YES, JUDITH! NO ONE COULD SURVIVE A FALL LIKE THAT!

OH, MARK!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, JUDITH. GO AHEAD, CRY. IT WILL HELP. YOU'RE SAFE NOW. SAFE WHERE YOU BELONG. IT'S OVER.

OVER? COULD IT REALLY BE? THE GIRL CRIED GREAT SOBS, AND HER TEARS WASHED AWAY HER FEARS...

OH, MARK, YOU TOOK SUCH A RISK! IF YOU KNEW ABOUT BRANCHE, YOU KNEW HE'D TRY TO KILL YOU--
YES, I DID, JUDITH, BUT HOW ELSE COULD I PROTECT YOU?
HAVEN'T YOU GUESSED YET WHAT'S IN MY HEART? HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU?

BUT TEARS DO NOT WASH AWAY-MEMORY...
NO! YOU-YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I'VE DONE! I KILLED FRANK! I--
I SAW YOU WITH FRANK ON THE CLIFF, JUST AS BRANCHE DID WITH HIS BINOCULARS. BUT YOU DIDN'T KILL HIM.

WHEN FRANK FELL INTO THE SEA, I PULLED HIM OUT. HE'S HURT, BUT SAFE. JUST NOW I HOPED THAT YOU AND I MIGHT--
--BUT I WAS WRONG! IT'S HIM YOU LOVE, ISN'T IT?

YOU WERE KIND TO ME, JUDITH. AT LEAST—THANK YOU FOR THAT. COME. I'LL TAKE YOU TO FRANK. HE'S A LUCKY MAN.
MARK RICHARDS' VOICE WAS TENDER, BUT COULD A WOMAN NOTICE SUCH THINGS WHEN SHE HAD JUST BEEN RELEASED FROM A NIGHTMARE?..
FRANK! OH, FRANK!
FOR THE SPACE OF A DOZEN HEART-BEATS, SHE COULD NOT EVEN THINK CLEARLY AT ALL...
MARK?
AND THEN—SHE LOOKED AFTER THE MAN WHO HAD RISKED HIS LIFE FOR HER, THE MAN WHO NEEDED HER, AND SHE KNEW WHERE SHE BELONGED...
JUDITH! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
MARK!
AFTER HIM, FRANK—FORGIVE ME—
SHE RAN AFTER HER LOVE. AND IF ANOTHER MAN WAS HURT BY HER GOING—TIME WOULD HEAL HIS WOUNDS, WHEN TWO PEOPLE BELONG TOGETHER... WHAT OTHER WAY IS THERE—FOR THEM?
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE ON OR ABOUT MAY 16
THE END
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Months ago, we asked that readers write in to tell us of their ESP (extra-sensory perception) experiences . . . hunches, forecasts of the future, dreams . . . any *true* experiences they may have had.

At this writing, we have received many fascinating letters from you. This month, the keyhole of the Dark Mansion lets in the light from the exciting world of psychic phenomena, in the firm belief that it is possible to see into the future and foretell a coming event.

We invite *you* to write in. The experience you report need not have happened to *you* personally. In many families there is a relative—an aunt, a mother or father—who is reputed to be possessed of the gift of prophecy. How many times we hear people talk about "Aunt Maria—she's a real witch!" or "My brother—he's weird. Sometimes he dreams about something—and a few days later, it happens!"

For every report sent to us and accepted for publication in this column, the editors of the Dark Mansion will pay $10.00. Keep them brief, try to report the incident clearly and in a straightforward manner, and above all . . . keep them TRUE.

This month, we are sending $10.00 to Richard Cross of Los Angeles, Calif., who reports on a true incident that happened to his uncle almost thirty years ago:

Arthur B. (Richard's uncle) was a wealthy man in the import business. Early in 1942, he went on a trip to Puerto Rico. For a month he transacted his business. Then, just as he was ready to return home, the war department declared a state of emergency and reserved all available seats on airplanes for army and navy personnel. Arthur was told he would have to wait three or four weeks for a plane.

He wrote his wife in New York telling her of his predicament and resigned himself to three weeks of boredom. One night, he stepped into a bar in old San Juan. There he met Mr. and Mrs. Garcia, a couple he knew casually from New York City.

"Isn't it terrible," said Arthur, "the way we're all stranded here?"

"Stranded?" the Garcias laughed. *"We're* going back to New York on the S.S. Selva on Friday."

Arthur was stunned. It was Wednesday evening. Was it possible for him to get passage back to the United States on the same ship as the Garcias? Could they . . . ?

"Sure we can get you on the ship," Frank Garcia assured him. "If they don't find you a cabin of your own, you can bunk out in ours. It may not be too comfortable, but this *is* wartime. And it means you'll be back home with your family on Sunday."

Arthur was delighted. He sent off a telegram to his wife announcing he was leaving on Friday by ship and would be home the following Sunday. He went back to his hotel a happy man.

The following day, Thursday, his wife received the telegram. She was pleased at his news. That night, she went to bed and fell into a deep sleep. Toward morning, she had a dream. She saw a ship plowing through the ocean. On its deck, her husband was standing with a man and woman. All three were smiling and talking animatedly. Suddenly, a huge wave engulfed the prow as a terrific explosion from undersea rocked the ship from stem to stern. Horrified, she saw Arthur hurled over the railing into the roaring torrent as the other couple disappeared into the ocean.

The dream was so frighteningly realistic that Arthur's wife woke up drenched with perspiration. She turned on the light and looked at the clock—5:30 a.m. There was no time to lose! The dream had made such a fantastic impression on her there was no doubt in her mind that if Arthur sailed that morning something dreadful would happen.

She instantly put through a long distance telephone call to Arthur's hotel. But it was

wartime and the overseas telephone lines were heavily overloaded. It was 7:30 a.m. before she heard Arthur's voice.

"Arthur! You mustn't sail on that ship this morning!" Her voice was high, hysterical.

"What's wrong with you, darling? You can't be serious! I'll be home three weeks earlier by taking this ship."

"You'll never get home alive if you do!" she persisted. She then told him all about her dream and the vision she had had of the ship blowing up.

"Promise me you'll wait for a plane—even if it takes a month! I won't rest a moment until you swear to me you won't take that ship. Please, Arthur!" she begged.

Only to satisfy his wife, Arthur said: "All right, darling. I won't take the ship. I'll wait for a plane."

But he had no intention of keeping his promise. He wouldn't pass up this opportunity to get home sooner. An hour later he was standing on the deck of the S.S. Selva, enjoying the salt air talking to the Garcias, and looking forward to the voyage ahead. The ship was in the final stages of preparation. In less than an hour they would be in the open sea.

The Garcias went below. Arthur began to think of his wife. Why had she been so emotional on the phone? He couldn't remember ever hearing her as overwrought as she had sounded that morning—hysterical, really. With a shock, Arthur realized it was the first time he had ever lied to his wife. Right now, she was calm, convinced that at this very moment he was safely in his hotel room.

A terrible pang of conscience assailed Arthur. *He had to get off that ship!* He could not cheat his wife that way. But if he was to leave the ship, there was no time to loose! He rushed up to the first man in uniform he could find.

"I want my baggage removed immediately from this ship! Here's my passport . . ". There was desperation in Arthur's voice.

"But, sir! You can't possibly get your baggage now!" replied the porter in astonishment. "It's too late! See? the gangplank is about to go up!"

Arthur didn't wait to hear more. He was dimly aware of the ship's whistle blowing as he ran the few yards to the gangplank. Amid shouts from the crew, Arthur pushed his way through the crowd of passengers assembled at the ramp, which was already raised above the dock. He was going to make it now—and he did, jumping down the last few feet to the dock!

Arthur felt a tremendous sense of relief. He didn't notice the stares of the crowd who had watched all this. Without looking back at the ship, he walked off the wharf and back to his hotel.

Later that day, Arthur was reading in the lounge waiting for dinner when he heard the news flash over the radio.

The S.S. Selva had hit a mine six hours after it set sail from Puerto Rico. The ship was blown apart and sank almost instantly.

His friends, the Garcias, drowned along with 56 passengers and crew members aboard the ship. There were no survivors.

There you are, readers—a shocking but documented story of E.S.P. that actually happened. If you know of such an experience, send it in to us. If we print it, you will receive $10.00, as the above reader did.

Now here's a letter from a reader who writes to say:

Dear Editors:

I would like some information about your magazines, "Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion" and "Secrets of Sinister House". Please write me the price of a year's subscription for both magazines.

I have missed certain issues lately. If I subscribe, I might solve this problem. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,
M. Gulick
Tempe, Arizona

Thank you very much for your letter. Many of our readers have written in asking us how they can subscribe.

HERE'S HOW: Rates for twelve 25c issues (approximately 2 years): $3.00 in U.S. and Possessions; $4.00 elsewhere.

SEND MONEY ORDER OR CHECK TO: SUBSCRIPTION DEPT.: P.O. Box 1047, Flushing, N.Y. 11352.

Meanwhile, don't be afraid to open up to the magnetic waves of that other world . . . the strange, as yet uncharted world of E.S.P. It *does* exist.

See you next issue! The Editors